DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 168 653 JC 790 236

AUTHOR Fast, Casey
TITLE Educational Marketing Methods at Lane Community College.
PUB DATE 5 Mar 79
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Coping with Decline Conference (St. Louis, Missouri, March 5, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Courses; *Junior Colleges; *Marketing; *Mathematics; *Publicize; Public Relations; *Student Recruitment; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

Peter Drucker defined marketing as "the promotion of a product or service from its inception through every step of its evolution and distribution until it reaches the satisfied customer." Inherent in this definition are the four components of marketing: pricing, product, place, and promotion. The product itself is the most important element and the price the least important in relation to getting the customer to buy it; i.e., people will buy quality no matter the price. Believing themselves to have a good product at a reasonable price, members of the mathematics department at Lane Community College (Oregon) employed educational marketing methods to increase course enrollment. Four objectives emerged in the promotion of the mathematics program: (1) to create comfortable, attractive class and study areas; (2) to stage quarterly "events" at registration which would alleviate standing-in-line boredom and provide genuine caring, humanistic help to confused math students; (3) to get quarterly, positive media coverage that would change the image of the math department from threatening to friendly; and (4) to develop new courses to draw new students. Additionally, the philosophy was adopted that one must create, act, risk, and enjoy to obtain success. One example of the department's activities was the funeral for the English system of measurement during National Metric Week. (MB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED168653

EDUCATIONAL MARKETING METHODS

at

LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Casey Fast

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Casey Fast

March 5, 1979

JC 790 236

Paper presented at the Coping with Decline Conference (St. Louis, Missouri, March 5, 1979)

The Eugene, Oregon metropolitan area is presently populated by 55,681 motor vehicles. No matter how you cut it, in a community of approximately 130,000 people, that's a lot of cars, trucks, motorcycles, what have you. End to end, this line of vehicles would reach from San Francisco to Sacramento. There would be enough glass in those vehicles to cover the Panama Canal.

Transplant our Eugene community into Communist China and it would have only 13 autos! That's because in China the ratio of people to autos is 10,000 to 1. Imagine so few cars! Imagine St. Louis in China--with only 62 cars!

As a mathematician, I am able to draw an interesting conclusion from this situation: automobiles in China are totally useless. Like three-legged mules or dull darning needles, they are unneeded and unnecessary items. If autos really did have value, wouldn't the Chinese have more of them?

You would probably agree that this illustration is overdone and the conclusion totally inconsistent. Beware fallacious conclusions!

I recall reading in the book In Mathematical Circles, by Howard Eves, of a scientist who was performing an experiment with some fleas. He discovered that no matter how loudly he yelled, fleas without hind legs could not jump. Hence, he concluded that if the hind legs were removed from a flea, it could not hear.

Another fallacious conclusion--something that educators must surely avoid. Obviously the fleas could hear. Obviously the Chinese value autos and will begin buying more as soon as our governmental relations stabilize.

We are hearing statistics quoted which predict almost certain decline in student enrollment at all of our colleges and universities. Are these statistics leading us to valid conclusions?

The January 8, 1979, issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education says that the National Center for Educational Statistics reports total U.S. enrollment last year declined by 60,000 students. That number is equal to 8

times the enrollment of my school--Lane Community College, Oregon's second largest. Imagine shutting down my school plus seven more of comparable size last year.

California suffered last year's biggest loss: enrollment in noncredit courses at community colleges declined by a giant 40% (noncredit courses are the bread and butter of community colleges). Everybody down there is singing the Proposition 13 blues, and many of us are getting ready to join in on the next verse and chorus. Our song could last longer than that old "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall" which we used to sing on the back of the school bus.

Do these statistics mean we are in for <u>certain</u> decline? Perhaps. If we sit on our hands and worry, then the answer will inevitably be "yes" and in that case, each of us had better prepare for the worst--retrenchment, lay-offs, closing buildings, eliminating programs. Regarding this course of action, I have only two comments:

1. Expend your energies in preparing for the worst and you will have no strength left for accomplishing the best.

2. In other words, expect the worst and that's exactly what you will get. It was the Job of Bible days who said, "The thing that I feared is come upon me."

Consequently, I do not accept the idea of worrying and waiting. Instead I look for the opportunities flowering out in my garden of adversities. If the bees like the thistles in my garden better than clover for making honey, then I'll switch to growing thistles.

The article from <u>The Chronicle</u> mentioned earlier contained some challenging information which we have utilized at LCC: the total national women's enrollment is increasing; the number of part-time students is growing--up 4.7% in fall of 77 and 3.1% in fall of 76; the number of first year students in public colleges and universities is up 3.1%. These exciting statistics reinforced parts of my Math Department's educational marketing methods, developed several years ago to solve the problem of declining enrollment.

Peter Drucker, the world's foremost authority on marketing and management, defined marketing as "the promotion of a product or service from it's inception through every step of its evolution and distribution until it reaches the satisfied customer."

Inherent in this definition are the four components of the marketing mix--price, product, place, and promotion. Anyone who has taken a basic marketing class should be familiar with these terms. They form the heart of any marketing campaign--whether for cigarettes, breakfast cereal, diamond jewelry, or college classes.

All marketing experts agree that product is the most important element of the marketing mix. Begin here. Analyze your product, namely your class offerings, to see if they are really meeting the needs of your clients. Conduct surveys and read statistics. Study your market regularly.

When the Math Association of America released a study showing that women were culturally disadvantaged in mathematics, and when I read local governmental projections that the women's enrollment was expected to surpass that of men, our department quickly investigated the possibility of a math course especially for women. Joyce Duchesneau, a part-time instructor in our department, and I developed a brochure and questionnaire which we distributed in our downtown business establishments. We contacted companies like U.S. National Bank, First National Bank, Eugene Water and Electric Board, and Pacific Northwest Bell to ask questions like, "In general, how do you feel toward Mathematics?" "Are you currently taking a Math course?" "Do you think learning math helps in personal finances? Domestic activities? Achieving career goals? Increasing job opportunities?" After tabulating our survey, we felt confident that women employees would be receptive to a new course we called Math Renewal. The course covers basic arithmetic, fractions, decimals, and calculator use, and provides entry to algebra. It has flourished for one year now and is growing steadily. Used properly, the statistics paid off!

Too often we sit on surveys instead of using them. Surveys are the sails on our ship, not the ballast. They should be providing power and direction, not causing the boat to ride low in the water.

Essential for the development of a good product is a good staff. In fact, if I had my way, I would add "people" as the fifth "P" to the marketing mix of price, product, place, promotion.

What do people (your faculty) do for you? They develop the good product. By causing students to like the product, they create word-of-mouth advertising--better than television, newspapers, brochures, mailings. . . . They also generate repeat business--the satisfied student who returns for more of the same.

85% of all satisfied students will reenter school at a later date for additional classes, especially if they can return to a new course or program taught by their favorite instructors. This tells me something. It says that getting and keeping excellent, permanent faculty is vitally important to your school. Pay careful attention to employment recruiting campaigns in this time of declining enrollment. Back in the days of surplus students, any mediocre instructor could fill a classroom. Students were desperate to be admitted to schools--even those growing too rapidly to meet their educational demands.

The situation has changed. Today, it takes genuine excellence in instruction to pack the classroom and to retain the enrollment. Hire teachers and administrators who have excellent academic ability, but who also have personalities and styles compatible with your marketing needs.

Jonathan Ogden Armour said, "The most valuable ability of all is the ability to select men of ability." The late J. Paul Getty, oil billionaire, attributed most of his success to his skill in picking good people for subordinate positions. He said that "the basic qualities of a good executive are intelligence, initiative, interest, integrity, imagination, leadership, loyalty, energy, enthusiasm, previous employment record, knowledge, and experience."

Notice that Getty places knowledge and experience last on his list, the opposite of what most educators would do. He felt the five I's, intelligence, initiative, interest, integrity, and imagination, were much more important; with them, one could always develop knowledge and experience. If you disagree with Getty, then compare the struggle for success at your school with his fabulously wealthy and successful career. You may change your mind.

Find intelligent, motivated, and perhaps inexperienced people, hire them, and then, for heaven's sake, don't bog them down with the committee assignments and bureaucratic red tape of academia.

We often expect task forces or committees to solve our marketing needs, but David Ogilvy, chairman of Ogilvy and Mather Advertising Agency, said "Committees can criticize, but they should never be allowed to create." (By the way, Ogilvy started his company with no credentials, no clients, and only $6,000 in the bank. Twenty-eight years later, at his retirement, Ogilvy and Mather was one of the world's largest ad agencies with offices in 29 countries, a thousand clients, and billings of $800,000,000/year--more than the revenue of the British Government.) His formula for success:

1. Make a reputation for being a creative genius.

2. Surround yourself with partners who are better than you.

3. Leave them to get on with it.

I highly recommend two of Ogilvy's books: Confessions of an Advertising Man, and his autobiography, Blood, Brains and Beer. I'll have more quotes from these books a little later.

At Lane Community College much of our success is due to the freedom of and support for the faculty and staff in the development of a good product. Dr. Eldon Schafer, our President, has encouraged us to participate in many growing programs such as ACCESS and the League for Innovation. Through his leadership, we have been able to develop and maintain a good product. Yes, we do have some marketing problems, but we are being encouraged to experiment with ways of overcoming them.

How important is the price of your product? Is cost a big factor? How much will people pay? Can this be controlled?

Often, we as educators feel helpless when confronted with the spiraling cost of education. Regarding this problem, I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news first. . .

The expenses of education have grown at a prodigious rate and it is predicted that even greater increases will happen in the future. As it costs us more to teach, we must pass the charges along to our clients in increased taxes or tuition. At LCC our educational cost has grown annually by 11.63%, over the past three years. We are currently asking for an 8% tuition increase plus a 5% larger tax base to handle the increased costs. Of course, the tax measure faces rough sledding at the polls, and the student government is vehemently protesting the tuition increase. That's bad news.

Now for the good news--all marketing experts agree that price is the least important item of the marketing mix. Does that surprise you? If the product is good, if it has been properly promoted in the correct places, its cost will be a less significant factor.

Perhaps this is new to you as an educator. Realize that your attitude is the exception to the rule. You may consistently read price tags, but most people do not spend a great deal of time on them.

Last night I was in the bar here with an educator who insisted on seeing the price list before buying a drink. Since I usually buy my drink and pay for it without asking questions, I was rather amazed. But that's exactly what this guy did. He looked on the list to see that a Tequila Sunrise costs $2, and then asked the cocktail waitress if, perhaps, she would sell him one for $1.90. By this time I was ready to buy his drink for him! After all, does one drink for relaxation and enjoyment or for the opportunity to haggle over prices? If the product is good, I'm willing to pay the price.

Our college president, Eldon Schafer, has a very fine secretary on his staff--Marie Reid. Marie's husband, Admiral Reid, sells Mercedes Benz automobiles. Admiral is a good friend of mine and he told me something very interesting about what happens when someone buys a Mercedes. It works like this: Admiral suggests a fair price, the client accepts or rejects, the deal is closed, and no negotiating takes place. Why does this happen? Because Mercedes drivers buy quality, comfort, and prestige, and they are willing to pay for it.

Last year the decline in enrollment at private colleges and universities was only one half that of public schools, yet their tuition and fees are

significantly higher. According to UPI, the annual cost of a Harvard education is $8,140. Most Ivy League schools still have waiting lists. They too sell quality, comfort, and prestige. If we learn to do the same, our pricing will not be a troublesome factor.

Place, the fourth "P" of my five-P marketing mix, is a point on which community and two-year colleges have done well. We have excelled in offering our classes in community centers, public schools, store fronts, churches, travelling buses, and extension campuses.

In January 1978, my department opened what we call the Math Annex at Lane Community College's new Downtown Center (actually a vintage Montgomery Ward's building). This term, only one year later, we have 130 mathematics students enrolled in six individualized study courses. Our Annex is open a combination of 23 morning and evening hours per week to service students from the downtown business area. As we continue our promotion, the Downtown Annex will continue to grow.

And with the mention of promotion, we arrive at the last P of the marketing mix.

My father was an old-fashioned preacher, and he gave me some very helpful advice many years ago when he said, "You can't save souls in an empty church." David Ogilvy makes the same point by saying, "You can't bore people into buying."

Back in July 1975, when I became Mathematics Chairman at Lane Community College, it was as though I were walking onto the stage in the last act of a good play, before an empty theater. Our department with an enrollment of 465 FTE was making a good performance financially and educationally. But since 81% of all students try to avoid math, our troupe was putting on a good show to a lot of empty seats.

We had a good product. It was priced right, but because of preconceived prejudices against mathematics, most people hated us. When you have a bad product, David Ogilvy says, "promotions cannot produce more than a temporary kink in the sales curve." But with us it was different! I knew we were solid and, based on my background in marketing, I knew that good P.R. would reap increased enrollment.

So, in the fall of 1975, our department held several brainstorming sessions to generate promotion ideas and a promotional philosophy. (As an aside, I might say here that brainstorming meetings are our most valuable meetings. If yours are not, it's probably because you are not following the precise rules of brainstorming, formulated by Batten, Batten, Osborne and Durstine Advertising Agency. Brainstorming must be conducted in a format completely different from the usual meeting. If not, it will be of little value.)

From our brainstorm sessions we arrived at four immediate objectives:

1. To create comfortable, attractive class and study areas.

2. To stage quarterly "events" at registration which would alleviate standing-in-line boredom and provide genuine caring, humanistic help for confused math students.

3. To get quarterly, positive media coverage which would change the mathematics image from threatening to friendly.

4. To develop new courses to draw new students.

The first of these was easy. At a very low cost, through our governmental excess property program, we acquired easy chairs and small tables for comfortable study areas. We decorated the building with plants, colorful bulletin boards, and faculty pictures. Our staff members now wear name tags for the first few weeks of the term so they can be distinguished from students. Some of our instructors now play background music during test times. We even wrote a script for the aides and assistants in our large individualized study program so they will be able to greet students with phrases like, "It's Monday morning. How can we help you start the week?"

In general, we have removed the institutional image which is often so sterile and uninspiring. This has been replaced by a warm, friendly climate and it has been a success. Where we once had vacant halls and study areas between class periods, you will now find people hanging around to work and ask questions.

Our promotions on registration days have been even more interesting. Perhaps you recall the boredom and frustration of registration when you were a student? Our college's computerized system is one of the best and most efficient. Still, it needed some boosting in the human contact and morale departments.

Here is a quote from the Eugene Register-Guard, Oregon's second largest newspaper, regarding what happened at our first registration promotion:

> "Two plus Two" is part of a new equation for making mathematics fun at Lane Community College.
>
> So are the "Mathematics - You Can Count On It" T-shirts that department head Casey Fast and others in the department are wearing these days.
>
> "Two plus Two" is the CB radio nickname or "handle" for the mathematics department during registration at the college.
>
> A large sign at the entrance to the LCC parking lot invites students to call Two plus Two on CB channel 1 for answers to questions they have about registration.
>
> All this adds up to making the math department a "more friendly, accessible place," according to Fast.

Last term at registration, we moved in one of our Radio Shack Micro Computers and gave away free Biorhythm charts to anyone registering for a math class. The charts plotted the days of each person's physical, intellectual, and emotional ups and downs. They could be used to plan vacations, work days, dates, social activities. It was fun.

Probably the most enjoyable event to date was our Christmas caroling session. All thirty members of the department staff, carrying a huge Merry Christmas banner, marched into the middle of the registration activities. Accompanied by guitar and bells, we sang all the old favorites. Several hundred students joined us in singing Jingle Bells and Silent Night. Needless to say, our enrollment looked quite good that term.

These registration promotional events also easily fulfilled our third departmental objective--that of getting quarterly, positive media coverage. The newspapers, TV and radio stations usually call me now a few days prior to registration to inquire about upcoming events they can cover. Interviews for me and staff members are a regular occurrence.

Our fourth departmental objective, to develop new courses, has also been easily realized. I already mentioned our new Women's Math Renewal class and the Downtown math classes. Let's look briefly at some of the promotions downtown.

In the fifteen months since opening our downtown program, classes have grown to a present headcount of 130 students. Most of this growth is due to Leila Matheson, the woman who administers our operation there.

Leila came to us with a B.A. degree in literature, some minimal experience in administration, tutoring, and secretarial work. She had never taught math, but she did have a track record of being a go-getter. And that's exactly what she turned out to be.

Leila orchestrated a giant Christmas Grand Opening for the downtown campus, complete with a Christmas tree decorating contest and many dignitaries, including Oregon Senator Mark O. Hatfield. That was in 1977. Since then, she has become a member of the Downtown Merchants Association and regularly visits local businesses to meet new employees and invite them to take a math class. She also writes a regular column in the Eugene Downtown News.

Probably our most unique promotion downtown has been a free instructional program for purchasers of electronic calculators. During the 1978 Christmas sales days, several large retailers (Bi Mart, Fred Meyer Super Markets, Sears, Radio Shack, etc.) cooperated with us in this effort. Each customer who purchased a calculator from one of those stores received a coupon redeemable for one hour of free instruction in the calculator's use from LCC. The stores paid the advertising bills, we provided the instruction, and the customers received excellent service. Everyone was happy--especially us, as we were able to recommend math courses to our calculator clients.

Through all of this Leila has been underpaid and overworked. She could do an excellent administrative job on your staff, too, but I hope none of you are getting ideas about that.

Some other new courses where promotions have paid off:

1. Our "Follow the Eclipse" class. Conceived in the Math Department and offered as Science credit, this class bussed 105 students on a 500-mile field trip for a first-hand view of a total solar eclipse.

2. Next term we will be celebrating Einstein's 100th Birthday on March 14 with a giant party and a one credit follow-up course on this tremendous intellectual and spiritual giant. I have no doubts. The entire affair will be a smash!

3. Micro Computers course (Math Trends). The student will acquire an awareness of the computer revolution and the massive ongoing changes presently occurring. Study topics will include Micro, Mini, and Maxi literacy, Mini graphics, small business systems, Micros as a teaching aid, personal computers, computer games.

4. Math in Our Culture course. Mathematics approached from a cultural/historical viewpoint. The primary goal of this course is to develop an understanding of mathematics and an appreciation of the relationship of mathematics to other branches of knowledge. The techniques of doing mathematics are not stressed. Topics covered include: probability, logic, art, music, the computer, statistics. Recommended for the Liberal Arts major.

Now, <u>more important</u> than any ideas I have previously offered, let me give four key words of advice:

1. Create
2. Act
3. Risk
4. Enjoy

These constitute the philosophical heart of my Educational Marketing Methods.

Regarding the verb, "Create," I suggest that you avoid the tyranny of reason. You will then become creative.

For the verb, "Act," I ask the question, "Are you an extinct volcano or are you alive and active?"

"Risk." Most people prefer security, but I advise that security is necessary only for those who are frightened. What about you?

Most important of all is the verb "Enjoy." Michael Phillips says that to truly be successful, "Find something you enjoy and do it with a passion. Wealth and success will be the side result."

Let me illustrate my point.

As one of our departmental public relations gestures about a year ago, we decided to honor National Metrics Week. The math staff thought this would be very appropriate and we brainstormed ways of attracting attention. In our building and hallways we decided to present a complete display of all the present uses of the metric system; i.e., tire sizes, metric tool kits, dress patterns, recipes, and so on. We held a bake sale from a metric recipe cookbook. We had a micro computer with a conversational program on metrics. We had free metric measuring sticks and many give-aways. We showed films, video tapes, and conducted free workshops. All of this was very good, but I knew it was not quite enough to really pique the public interest. After all, many people do not like the metric system and they certainly won't drive across town to honor something they don't like. We needed an attention getter!

I suggested that we hold a funeral! A burial for the present archaic, inefficient English System of Measurement. Was I ever greeted with a storm of skepticism! Many of the math staff felt a funeral was morbid, depressing, embarrassing, and downright sick! I didn't even respond directly to their complaints, but instead met criticism with positive questions like:

1. Did you know that a local funeral home has donated a coffin?

2. Did you know that the Science Department has donated a skeleton and old measuring utensils to put in the coffin?

3. Did you know that Performing Arts has provided costumes for the pallbearers?

4. Did you know that the school's Dixieland Band will play?

5. Did you know that every TV station in town wants to record the event?

The day of the funeral dawned and I was scared to the point of wanting to climb in the coffin myself. Everything was set--the coffin, the jazz band, the eulogy, the TV stations, National Public Radio, and forty placards for an instant metrics riot--but I could count on only four of our thirty staff members to be present. That wasn't even enough to carry the coffin!! Talk about a risk!

Fortunately, the students were interested, and, as we began to set up the public address system, many came around to investigate. I promptly drafted them as pallbearers and mourners, and helped them into costume.

As the band began to play and our procession filed across campus our group was small, but within five minutes we grew from about 25 to several hundred in number. It was especially interesting to see the math faculty who had initially peeked out of their office doors in skepticism. They now quickly joined the group, waving signs and rioting for the first time in their lives. The crisis was past and we were Enjoying ourselves, but only after the steps of Creating, Acting, and Risking.

Last January I was buying new shoes and was a little surprised when the store clerk greeted me by name. I asked, "Perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me how you know my name?" He introduced himself as Richard Van Dederson and said he had seen several of our events on TV. Then we got on with the business of finding shoes.

While I paid my bill, Richard said, "I took a few math courses a long time ago at the university. Now after years of business, I might need some refreshing. Have you any courses that would be of value?"

I said, "You bet! Remember that guy, John Loughlin, whom you saw on TV doing the eulogy for the burial? He is teaching a course in statistics--just the thing for business majors. We also have a new course in micro computers--perfect for your inventory and ordering."

Last week Richard gave me a hearty wave as he went by my office window on his way to start class--a new student at LCC.

This is only one example of how our Marketing Methods have paid off. In the past four years we have grown from 465 FTE to approximately 520. Our quarterly head count runs over 2000. This is in spite of college and statewide declines.

Marketing works. It's as simple as that.